

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of all outstanding rejections, and allowance of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-7 and 9-19 are pending, of which Claims 1 and 9 are independent. Claims 1 and 9 have been amended. Support for the amendments can be found throughout the originally-filed disclosure, for example, at least in paragraphs [0012], [0023], and [0024] of the specification. Thus, Applicants submit that no new matter has been presented.

Applicants respectfully request entry of this amendment after final as it is being presented in an earnest effort to advance prosecution and place the application in condition for allowance. Applicants have merely clarified how messages are commonly stored in a database and have made some minor corrections to the claims in accordance with preferred practice.

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-10, 12-14, and 17-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Janacek et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,684,248) in view of Poplawski et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0208441). Claims 4 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Janacek et al. in view of Poplawski et al. and Fung et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0055909). Claims 16 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Janacek et al. in view of Poplawski et al. and Choubey et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,305,430). Applicants traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 is directed to a method for facilitating access to messages and Claim 9 is directed to a method for a business to provide customer access to a private message. One feature of these methods is storing the message in a common storage area of a database together with all other messages stored in the database, such that all messages are stored in the common storage area. As discussed in paragraph [0023] of the specification, this feature, in conjunction with other features of Applicants' invention, contemplates dynamic access of a message, regardless of the number of intended recipients thereof or the size of the message, from a common storage area. This is in contrast to a so-called "static inbox functionality," wherein messages sent to a particular user are stored separately from messages sent to other users.

Janacek et al. relates to a method of transferring data from a sender to a recipient. While Janacek et al. employs a message database, unique message stores are created within that database for each recipient of a message. Messages addressed to a particular recipient then are deposited into that recipient's unique message store. (See Janacek et al.'s Abstract and disclosure, for example, column 5, lines 1-6). In contrast, a message in the invention of Claims 1 and 9 is stored in a common storage area of a database together with all other messages stored in the database, such that all messages are stored in the common storage area.

Poplawski et al. relates to an electronic bill presentment and payment system and method. The Office Action cited Poplawski et al. to teach a message alert system, in which an intended recipient is prompted to create or register a second identifier. Applicants have not found any disclosure in Poplawski et al. regarding storing a message in a common

storage area of a database together with all other messages stored in the database, such that all messages are stored in the common storage area, as recited in Claims 1 and 9.

Fung et al. relates to a technique for web site account and e-commerce management from a central location. The Office Action cited Fung et al. to teach the use of an identifier that is a physical characteristic of the user that is identifiable by a biometric identification system. Applicants have not found any disclosure in Fung et al. regarding storing a message in a common storage area of a database together with all other messages stored in the database, such that all messages are stored in the common storage area, as recited in Claims 1 and 9.

Choubey et al. relates to a technique for reducing data storage requirements on mail servers. The Office Action cited Choubey et al. to teach storing only a single copy of an email with multiple recipients in a common storage space. Importantly, however, the technique of Choubey et al. only stores an email in a common storage space if the email has multiple recipients and if the total storage space required is less than a predetermined threshold value. Otherwise, the email message is copied to a separate Inbox folder of each recipient. (See Column 4, lines 23-50.) Thus, Choubey et al. does not store a message in a common storage area of a database together with all other messages stored in the database, such that all messages are stored in the common storage area, as recited in Claims 1 and 9.

Applicants submit that Janacek et al., Poplawski et al., Fung et al., and Choubey et al., whether considered individually or in combination, do not suggest features of the invention defined by Claims 1 and 9, and thus the invention of Claims 1 and 9 would not have been obvious over these cited documents. Therefore, Applicants submit that independent Claims 1 and 9 are allowable over the cited art. Each of the remaining claims

are dependent, either directly or indirectly, on one of independent claims 1 and 9, and are allowable by virtue of their dependency, and for further defining patentable features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration thereof is requested.

Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance and request an early Notice of Allowance.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C., office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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